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Notice to Readers Smallpox Vaccine No Longer Available for Civilians -- United States

In May 1983, Wyeth Laboratories, Inc., discontinued general distribution of smallpox vaccine; production for general use was discontinued in 1982. Wyeth is the only active, licensed producer of smallpox vaccine in the United States.

Wyeth continues to produce smallpox vaccine for the Department of Defense, which routinely vaccinates all its active duty personnel. Reported by International Health Program Office; Center for Infectious Diseases; Quarantine Div, Center for Prevention Svcs, CDC.

Editorial Note

Editorial Note: The non-availability of smallpox vaccine for the civilian population should end its misuse in attempts to treat or prevent diseases such as herpes (1,2).

The only non-military persons for whom smallpox vaccination is recommended are laboratory workers exposed to orthopox viruses (including variola, vaccinia, and monkeypox) (3). Means to assure the continued availability of smallpox vaccine to protect these workers are being developed.

References

1. CDC. Vaccinia necrosum after smallpox vaccination--Michigan. *MMWR* 1982;31:501.
2. Food and Drug Administration. Inappropriate use of smallpox vaccine. *FDA Drug Bulletin* 1982;12:12.
3. Immunization Practices Advisory Committee. Smallpox vaccine. *MMWR* 1980;29:417-20.

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